

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State* ~~MR~~ ~~HR~~ JS

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Info

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DECEMBER 1

WAR CRIMES TRIAL FORMER FLEMISH SS LEADER ROBERT JAN VERBELEN (EMBASSY WEEKA NOS. 15, 16 AND 21, 1962; NO. 5, 1963; NO. 42, 1964) BEGAN NOVEMBER 29. VERBELEN SENTENCED TO DEATH IN ABSENTIA BELGIAN COURT 1947. ARRESTED AUSTRIA APRIL 1962, IN CUSTODY SINCE THEN WHILE INVESTIGATION PROCEEDED. VERBELEN HAD ACQUIRED AUSTRIAN CITIZENSHIP 1959 AND ADMINISTRATIVE COURT RULED IT COULD NOT BE REVOKED, HENCE AUSTRIA COULD NOT COMPLY WITH 1962 BELGIAN EXTRADITION REQUEST SINCE LAW PROHIBITS EXTRADITION OWN CITIZENS.

PAGE TWO RUEHCR 1208FI

IN LENGTHY OPENING STATEMENT, VERBELEN CLAIMED HE REPORTED AMERICAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES WESTERN AUSTRIA 1945, WAS INTERROGATED BY CIC, THEN EMPLOYED BY US MILITARY, FIRST AS INTERPRETER THEN MANAGER NOMCOMS CLUB. EARLY 1946 VERBELEN CAME VIENNA WHERE CIC ALLEGEDLY EMPLOYED HIM AS AGENT AGAINST SOVIET SUBVERSION UNTIL OCCUPATION ENDED 1955. IN 1956, ALLEGEDLY BEGAN EMPLOYMENT AUSTRIAN SECURITY AUTHORITIES (STAATSPOLIZEI) WHO THEN HELPED HIM ACQUIRE AUSTRIAN CITIZENSHIP. VERBELEN FURTHER STATED HE SUBSEQUENTLY APPROACHED BY COMMUNIST INTELLIGENCE AGENT WHO THREATENED EXPOSE WARTIME PAST UNLESS VERBELEN WORKED FOR COMMUNISTS. THIS HE REFUSED DO AND ATTRIBUTES HIS ARREST THIS REFUSAL.

TRIAL ATTRACTING WIDE BUT NOT UNUSUAL PUBLICITY HERE. ALLEGED US, AUSTRIAN INTELLIGENCE CONNECTIONS PROMINENTLY MENTIONED PRESS BUT, IN COUNTRY LONG ACCUSTOMED "THIRD MAN" ATMOSPHERE, HAS NOT YET CAUSED ANY PARTICULAR FUROR. EMBASSY INTENDS REPLY ALL PRESS INQUIRIES (NONE SO FAR RECEIVED) BY SAYING WE HAVE NO INFORMATION THIS MATTER.

RIDDLEBERGER

BT

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
DATE 2703 2006

FOR COORDINATION WITH

State

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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

DATE 2703 2006

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